

Instant Criminal Background Check System, known as the NICS. We put in place this background check system to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, but our background check system is failing.

For example, the NICS database of mentally ill individuals has fewer than 20 percent of the records that it should have. This is unacceptable. If you are a violent criminal, you should fail a background check. If you've been involuntarily committed to a mental institution, you should fail a background check. If you've been convicted of domestic abuse, you should fail a background check—no one argues with that—but if the information is not in the database, then these dangerous individuals will get their hands on guns, which could lead to devastating consequences.

Mr. Speaker, my bill will improve incentives for States to partner with the Federal Government, and it will maintain an accurate, accessible, and up-to-date NICS. This is a strong step in the right direction, and it has the support of voices on both sides of the gun debate.

□ 1140

CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, for far too long our country has ignored the blatant warning signals that climate change is real, and its effects are happening all around us, from droughts to wildfires to extreme flooding. The time to act is now. Numerous reports indicate that we are dangerously close to losing the window of opportunity in which we can meaningfully address climate change.

My district of Sacramento has already been working hard to implement commonsense policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By developing cutting-edge clean energy technology and creating energy retrofit programs, my constituents understand the urgent need to tackle this issue head-on.

Now is the time for Congress to follow their lead and show that we, too, are committed to mitigating and reversing the devastating effects of climate change. Failure to heed new warnings and take action will have drastic economic and environmental effects, not just for our generation, but for our children and grandchildren. The time to act is now.

INCREASING POLICE PRESENCE AT SCHOOLS

(Mr. MEADOWS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, the recent school massacres at Newtown, Connecticut, sent shock waves across

our country. And as a father, I grieved with the families that lost loved ones on that day, but as a legislator, I vowed that I would take action to prevent future tragedies.

According to a recent Gallup poll, 53 percent of Americans believe that increasing police presence at schools would be very effective in preventing future tragedies. After speaking with local law enforcement, superintendents, and principals in my district, I believe it is the best path forward. That is why I will be introducing the Protect America's Schools Act today.

This legislation would revitalize the Cops in Schools grant program, which has not been funded since fiscal year 2005, and fund it at \$30 million annually. The CIS program is specifically designed to assist local law enforcement agencies in the hiring of new officers.

And with a \$16.4 trillion debt, we must take action, but we must be fiscally responsible. The \$30 million to pay for this critical grant program would be offset by taking the unspent funds from the operations budget of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Protect America's Schools Act is not the only answer, but it is a critical step forward to protect our Nation's children. Keeping our children safe is not only an area where both political parties can find common ground, but as lawmakers, we have a moral obligation to make sure that we do just that.

BROAD AND DEVASTATING EFFECT OF SEQUESTRATION

(Mr. PETERS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, San Diego is the largest metropolitan area for military personnel and base operations. My district is home to seven military installations, and sequestration will have a broad and devastating effect on our military families and economy.

In total, defense spending is responsible for 25 percent of San Diego's GDP. That means 1 out of every \$4 generated in San Diego is achieved as a result of defense spending. The proposed cuts to the defense budget will cost San Diego more than 30,000 defense-related jobs, and the Navy will be forced to put a freeze on hiring civilians, many of whom are veterans.

With 11.5 percent of our community's veterans unemployed and a shocking 25 percent of veterans between 18 and 24 struggling to find employment, any further reduction in job opportunities for our Nation's heroes is unacceptable. We can neither threaten our military readiness with indiscriminate cuts nor can we fail the brave men and women of our Armed Forces and their families who have already sacrificed so much.

Please join with me in bringing an end to the partisan gridlock and finding solutions that do not put undue

burdens on those who risk their lives in defense of our freedom.

RECOGNIZING REVA BRITAN

(Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Reva Britan for her brilliant 25 years of service to the people of south Florida.

Reva began her career in 1988, after successfully raising five sons, and became a congressional staffer for former Congressman Larry Smith, then worked for former Congressman Peter Deutch, my predecessor, and for the last 8 years, she has been working with me in my district office. Her continuity of service and her depth of experience has benefited thousands of my constituents.

She is a much-loved staffer who brings her joy, her light, and her smile to the Pembroke Pines office every single day. Whether she's helping someone set up a tour or greeting constituents on the phone, she does it all with ease and elegant grace.

On behalf of the constituents of Florida's 23rd Congressional District, we thank Reva for her service and her dedication to our community, our office, and our country.

REJECT THE SEQUESTER

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, in the State of the Union address this week, President Obama laid out a powerful vision for our Nation, one that will create jobs, tear down barriers to prosperity, and lift the most vulnerable out of poverty.

At the same time, the Republican-controlled House has yet to bring a bill to the floor to prevent the unconscionable budget sequester from slashing thousands of jobs and pushing poor and low-income individuals over the edge.

As the President said this week, we cannot grow the economy by shifting the cost of health care or college onto families that are already struggling, or by forcing our communities to lay off more teachers, more firefighters, and more police officers.

We must reject the sequester and reject proposals that would balance the budget on the backs of seniors, veterans, and low-income families. Everyone should have the opportunity to climb, strive, and reap the rewards of the American Dream. That is how we build our economy for all and create a better world for our children.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

(Mr. CLEAVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1